

DIVINE GLORY

BROUGHT TO VIEW

IN THE

FINAL SALVATION OF ALL MEN.

A

LETTER

To the Friend to Truth.

By One who wishes well to all Mankind.

"By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon
ALL MEN to justification and life." PAUL.

"And ALL FLESH shall see the salvation of God."
LUKE iii. 6.

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A LETTER, &c.

S I R,

THOUGH unconvinced by your arguments, I am pleased with the temper you discover; and am happy to find, you can unite the *moderation* of a *fair disputant* with the *candour* of a *christian*. Unlike some others, who have engaged in the controversy, you attack *opinions*, and not their *author*, wisely considering others may differ from you in sentiment, without being *insidious* foes to the innocence of mankind. However—though recommended by so much candour and moderation, I am still under the disagreeable necessity of dissenting from your religious system. Nor can I calmly resign up a number of my species to everlasting misery, notwithstanding all you have said to prove it consistent with the justice of God, and essential to his glory. I have such a veneration for my creator, as to suppose he needs no foil to set off his perfections: Such an opinion of the saints, as to imagine they could relish *their* felicity, without

without being spectators of the misery of the damned. I place such a value upon the merits and death of my redeemer, as to conclude all will be happy for whom he suffered on the cross. And I pay such a regard to the positive declarations of scripture, as to anticipate the restitution of all things ; — when the ruins of the fall shall be more than repaired, and *the creature which now groans shall groan no more.*

From these few hints it must be evident to all, the Gods we respectively serve are very unlike each other ; and that our prospects beyond the grave do as widely differ. The God, to whom *you* pay your religious homage, needs the introduction of sin and misery, in order to illustrate his own character, and display his divine perfections. *I* bow my knee to a power *intrinsically* excellent, who can shine without contrast ; whose glory is essential ; whose happiness is immutable ; and who would be the admiration of all his creatures, even were guilt and suffering banished the universe. *You* expect to look down from heaven upon numbers of wretched objects, confined in the pit of hell, and blaspheming their creator forever. *I* hope to see the prison-doors opened ; and to hear those tongues, which are now profaning the name of God, chanting his praise. In one word, *you* imagine the divine glory will be advanced by immortalizing sin and misery ; *I* by exterminating both natural and moral evil, and introducing universal happiness. Which of our systems is best supported, let reason and scripture determine. Of this I am certain, we equally differ from the ORTHODOX sentiments of our country ; and for this reason, *I* ought to be heard with the same candour which hath been exercised towards *you*.

I must confess, I was not a little surprized, when I observed the reception your pamphlet met with, even from persons, who style themselves CALVINISTS; and pretend *they* are the only true followers of our venerable fathers. Could those pious worthies (for such I *really* esteem them) return to this world, they would reprobate *your* doctrines as earnestly as they would *mine*. *Universal redemption*, which you allow, they never admitted as an article of their faith. But *that*, and many other points, advanced in your pamphlet, they considered as fatal *heresies*, subversive of the true gospel, and destructive to the souls of men. What then must I think of those serious persons, who condemn all innovations in religion, and profess the antient CALVINISTIC doctrines of this country? Either, that they (like many other honest men) have changed their opinions; or that they do not rightly apprehend their own religious system.

That controversy may be so conducted as to injure christianity, I am very sensible: And no less so, that it may be turned to the very great advantage of divine truth. This appears to be your opinion, and I readily acquiesce in it. I agree with you, that "all doctrines supposedly erroneous," ought to be tried by the standard of the holy scripture. And that a "a disposition to check every thing of the kind can be only attributed to a want of proper zeal, in the cause of truth." It is indeed hard to conceive, how a good man can see a doctrine borne down, which he esteems the glory of the gospel; or a sentiment propagated, which *he* imagines to be destructive of all virtue. Your zeal, therefore, in opposing the doctrines of the reformation, as well as those contained in a certain pamphlet, is an undoubted evidence of your christian sincerity.

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But to return to the work which is the more immediate occasion of this letter. I shall only take notice, at present, of the more exceptionable parts of your book. As soon as any will undertake the publication of it, you shall have a complete reply to the whole.

And I am the rather determined not to enlarge on this occasion, as I apprehend you have given up the matter in dispute, in the very first argument you bring against it. Your comment upon 1 Tim. ii. 3. and 1 Tim. iv. 10. leads to a conclusion of which you are not aware. I am ready to appeal to those who are most prejudiced in favour of your work, whether, upon your own principles, *the final salvation of all men* does not necessarily follow. It were needless, therefore, to pursue you farther, till the error of this conclusion be detected.

The passages, to which I referred, are as follows. "God our saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 3. "The living God, who is the saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10. The former of these texts you explain after the usual manner; as intimating a desire that "all people, nations, and classes of men" should become acquainted with the gospel, and be made partakers of the salvation there revealed. In your 9th page, you acknowledge there is a foundation laid for the *universal* bestowment of life. Your words are,—“according to the express word of God, it is plain, that mercy cannot be granted without an atonement; and where it cannot be granted, it surely cannot be offered; and therefore, an offer of mercy, so compleat and universal as has been mentioned, must suppose an atonement
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equally compleat. and sufficient for the salvation of the whole world." I agree with you, in opposition to all the CALVINISTS that ever wrote upon the subject, that nothing could be a greater insult on the weakness and misery of mankind, than to offer them all salvation, unless there was a foundation laid for the bestowment of it. And I further acknowledge, "*the obedience and death of Christ*" are the moral ground of that general proclamation which is made in the gospel, and the pardon which is offered unto all men."

Let us now see what is the consequence of such a concession. According to your own principles, Jesus Christ has made a complete atonement for the sins of the whole world. He hath "tasted death for every creature." At the expence of his precious blood, he hath "brought pardon, life and immortality to every man." So that, in consequence of *his* merits and death, *every individual* of the human race *may* be happy in the future state; and God earnestly desires it. This I take to be your real meaning, from your remarks on the first and second passages of scripture adduced by *Mr. White*. I am not sensible of any misrepresentation.

But the conclusion I draw from hence is very different from the opinion *you* have undertaken to defend. The doctrine of *universal redemption* necessarily infers *universal salvation*. You allow the former, why would you dispute the latter? If Christ died for all, surely *all* will be *finally happy*. If the atonement be *complete* and *universal*, then *universal happiness* must ensue. This the apostle has incontestably proved, in his epistle to the Romans, as we shall see hereafter. Nor do I know of any but those who are commonly styled

tyled *Arminians*, that call this in question. The *Orthodox* universally suppose, that all will be saved for whom the son of God made an atonement. They would not so undervalue the merits and death of Christ, as to assert the contrary.

Allowing then, our divine redeemer died for *all*, and that God, their heavenly father, is *desirous* of their everlasting felicity, it must follow, that all will, in due time, “come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.” What should hinder the future accomplishment of the divine will; or the final success of Christ’s mediatorial undertaking? Our wishes are often frustrated: but God cannot be disappointed. Inasmuch as the saviour of the world has atoned for the sins of every creature, and God earnestly desires the salvation of *all*, it is inconceivable that any should perish everlastingly. His infinite power, wisdom and goodness forbid such a dishonourable supposition. If these attributes belong to God, he must be able and willing to reduce *all men* to a state of moral subjection to his authority. And if so, he certainly will not fail to do it. We may therefore, congratulate mankind upon their future prospects; and assure them of an entrance into heaven, as soon as they are qualified for his services and entertainments.

To this, I know, it is commonly objected, that men are *free agents*, and consequently may resist all the measures, God uses for their reformation and happiness. But, I must confess, I do not see how this conclusion follows. Though *free*, yet surely, infinite power, guided by infinite wisdom, and excited by infinite goodness, may devise such a scheme, as shall bring *all men* into a state of moral subjection, without
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breaking in upon their *liberty*. It would be a gross reflexion upon the great Jehovah to suppose him incapable of doing this. He *must* be able to treat all his creatures in such a manner, as shall lead them to act a wise and rational part. And he *will* do it, if he sincerely desires their happiness. To say therefore, that God “*wills* all men shou'd come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved,” is virtually declaring that the whole human race will be finally happy. His *desiring* they should be saved, *must* issue in their everlasting salvation. And this falls in with the *Calvinian* doctrine respecting this point. “The *will* of God (say the divines of that denomination) is *efficacious*, and therefore, he cannot fall short of his purpose. “It he *willed* all men to be saved, he would save them *effectually*.” It is annihilating his *Omnipotence* “to say, he *desires* to save all men, but that he cannot.”

Upon your own principles then, I must conclude against the sense you put upon these texts of scripture. However, I will do you the justice to own, your sentiments are, in some respects, more liberal than those which have received the stamp of *Orthodoxy* in this country. *Calvinistic* writers will admit the salvation of all for whom Christ died, but then, they pretend, he died only for the *Elect*. The *Westminster Divines*, who were under a solemn oath, to maintain nothing, in point of doctrine, but what they believed, express themselves in the following words. “By the decree of God, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death. Those of mankind, that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, chose in Christ to everlasting glory, out of his meer

free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works. And as he hath appointed the *Elect* unto glory, so hath he fore-ordained the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are Elected, being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ. Neither are any others redeemed by Christ—but the Elect only.” This was their idea of things, and, our fathers entertained the same opinion. You have receded to the other extreme. You suppose the atonement, *complete* and *universal*. God according to *you*, wishes well to *all* his creatures, but suffers his kind wishes to be defeated. According to *them*, he neither desires the happiness of a great part of mankind, nor made them with any such view. The God, you portray, is only deficient in wisdom and power; *theirs* equally destitute of goodness and sincerity.

But to return.—The offer of salvation being made to *all*, you argue the atonement, upon which that offer is grounded, must be *complete* and *universal*. That is, as you explain yourself, in virtue of the merits and death of Christ, *all men* are in a *salvable state*. This is the *truth*, but not the whole *truth*. The death of our blessed saviour rendered the salvation of mankind not only a possible thing, but actually *secured it to them in event*. In a sense, we are all *justified, reconciled and saved*. We are born into the world heirs of immortality. And the part, assigned us, is to acquire such habits, and improve in such graces, as shall fit us for the joys of heaven, at the resurrection day. Hence God is styled “the saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.” In consequence of the merits and sacrifice of Christ, eternal life is secured to every individual; though *believers* only will be *first* partakers of it. Others, who die in their sins must suffer the
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the consequences of their disobedience, and be reduced to a proper temper of mind, before they can be *rational*ly and *immortal*ly happy. But shall *they* perish forever? God forbid. The saviour of mankind (according to *your* confession) died for them, in common with others. An atonement is already made for *their* sins. And “through the obedience of one, the free gift hath come upon *them* to justification of life.” The consequence therefore, must be, that sooner or later, *they* also will reap the benefits of Christ’s mediatorial undertaking.

This is still further confirmed by the reasoning of St. Paul in the 5th Chap. of his epistle to the Romans, 8, 9, and 10th verses. “But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. *Much more* then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his son, *much more* being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” This reasoning, upon *my* principles, is strong and conclusive; upon *yours*, I can see no force or pertinence in it. Instead of arguing *a fortiori*, as the apostle intended, you would make him trifle, in a manner unworthy so great a character. If I understand him right, the idea he would convey is this, — that in as much as God hath taken such an extraordinary step, as to deliver up his only begotten son for the *sinner* and *ungodly*, we may rely on it, he will not fail to accomplish his benevolent purposes, even their *final restoration to favour*, and *everlasting salvation*. To illustrate my meaning, let me refer you to the 6, 7 and 8th verses. Having mentioned the *love of God*, the apostle endeavours to
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set forth the *exceeding greatness* of it from this consideration, that it was while men were *without strength, ungodly and sinners*, that Jesus Christ died for them. But, if such was *their* moral state for whom he suffered, MUCH MORE *shall they be saved from wrath through him*. In virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, these *sinners and ungodly* are in a *justified state*. Or, as the apostle expresses himself, these *enemies are reconciled to God*. They are all rescued from that state of *wrath and condemnation*, to which they were reduced by the fall. God therefore, being now reconciled to these *sinners, enemies, and ungodly*, the apostle would teach us to argue, that they shall *eventually* be saved by the death of his son. He would not have taken such measures for the recovery of mankind, had he not intended to accomplish their *everlasting salvation*.

The application is obvious: There is an atonement for sin *complete and universal*; and, in consequence of it, *the free gift has come upon ALL MEN to justification and life*. But whatever you understand by this *justification*; whether you include more or less in it, most certainly it follows from thence, that *all men will be finally happy*. For *they all being justified by his blood, shall MUCH MORE be saved from wrath through him*. In other words, the *universal redemption*, which you allow, *must issue in the universal salvation*, for which I contend.

I have now examined your first argument, and cannot but think, you perceive the consequences I have deduced from it. But blessed be God, the *salvation of all men* does not rest merely upon these texts of scripture. The same glorious truth is asserted in the 8th chapter of this epistle to the
Romans,

Romans, 19, 20 and 21st verses. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope: Because the CREATURE ITSELF also shall be DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION, INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD."* By the *creature*, we are to understand the *whole rational creation*. So the word is used in other places, as you may satisfy yourself by recurring to the *Greek Original*. And it is most positively declared, that the same moral intelligent creation, that is now subject to vanity shall hereafter be *delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. But *all men*, without exception, are subjected to vanity, therefore they shall *all*, without exception, be delivered from it; and instated in that freedom, which is the glory of *rational beings*, and constitutes their *supreme felicity*.

And in order to qualify them for this happy state, they will be *all* previously subjected to the governing authority of God. They will be delivered from their sins; their moral disorder will be rectified; their vicious habits subdued. Jesus Christ came into the world to put an end to *all vice and wickedness*. He was manifested that he might *destroy the works of the Devil*: By which we are to understand *natural and moral evil*. Hence those words of the Baptist John i. 29. "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the *sins of the world*!" And the name *Jesus* was conferred on him, because he should *eventually* "save his people from their *sins*."

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And having laid a foundation for universal happiness, in his death, God hath now crowned him with glory and honour. And this, not only as a reward for his humiliation, but the better to enable him to prosecute the benevolent design of his mission even the *Salvation of All*. "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name." No created power, either in heaven or earth, is able to *control his authority*. The consequence is, "every knee will finally bow, and every tongue confess him Lord, to the glory of the father." God hath solemnly sworn,—such a state of moral subjection to his authority shall universally take place; nor can we doubt of it, without giving him the lie.

For these reasons, Sir, (and numberless others, which I would produce, were it not for anticipating an ingenious work, where the subject is exhausted) I must still dissent from you, respecting the final issue of our Lord's benevolent undertaking. The repeated declarations of scripture, as well as my own natural apprehensions of the Deity, convince me, *all men will be finally happy*. This, I am sensible, is a very unpopular doctrine. It meets with great opposition in the world; and is very prejudicial to the *temporal interest* of those who have the courage to advance it. However, the question is—*not what is popular? but what is truth?* A real friend to revelation will always contend for the *latter*; happy, if his zeal is imputed to a right principle, and undiscouraged, though it exposes him to universal reproach.

Many serious persons are much concerned about the tendency of this doctrine. And you, Sir, seem to share in the general alarm. But why such uneasy apprehensions?

apprehensions? You give us to understand, that the great "ruler of heaven and earth permitted sin to come into existence, in order to give distinction to holiness." And you plainly intimate, that there will be no more sin in the world, than is necessary to raise the lustre of its opposite; and by the force of contrast, display its beauty in a more striking light. Why then are you alarmed at the doctrine of *universal salvation*? Suppose unthinking minds *should* take the advantage of it? Suppose it *should* be so perverted as to increase the number of bad men? Upon *your* principles, this should be a matter of joy. The more wickedness there is in the world the more beautiful will holiness appear. The more will free grace be enhanced; and the more will God be known and admired by his rational creation. You ought therefore, to deprecate a general reformation of manners. And if you ever prayed, it should be for a spirit of delusion, that still greater numbers might sin against God, and be damned everlastingly for *his* glory, and to give distinction to holiness. I am surprized, you should be so apprehensive of prevailing impiety, when you are so well convinced of the solid advantages of it.

But to return;—did you and other good minds really deprecate *moral evil*; did you wish to see it utterly exterminated, you would find nothing in the book you oppose, to fill you with uneasy apprehensions. It is for want of due examination, you pronounce so unfavourably upon it. I defy the art of man to prove that doctrine an encouragement to licentiousness, which insists, that *a man will be miserable, while he is wicked*; and that *he must be virtuous in order to be happy*. If sinners are punished, in proportion to their guilt; and
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are excluded heaven, 'till they are humbled and reformed, all the ends of the vindictory part of God's law are fully answered.

The *system of error*, which to me appears most fatal to the morals of mankind, is that which makes God the efficient cause of all evil, and refers all our wicked actions to his divine agency. Had the pamphlet, you oppose, contained any thing of this kind, I should readily have born testimony against it. I am not ignorant, that men would take the advantage of such doctrines, and impiously charge all their vices upon the blessed God. Could they be once persuaded, in their own minds, that (contrary to all experience) they had no will of their own; that they were only instruments in the hand of God, while *he* was the efficient cause of all the mischief perpetrated in the world, they would be very unconcerned about their behaviour. They could not but perceive, on this supposition, that virtue and vice were mere empty names.

And yet, these are the doctrines, which have been proclaimed from the desk; and offered to the world as truths of the gospel. Lest men should reflect too severely upon themselves, for their wicked conduct, they are told, for their comfort, God is the efficient cause of all their actions: That sin is infinitely conducive to his glory: And that we ought to be thankful for all the immoralities which have disgraced mankind! These are the monstrous errors, which appear to me most pernicious to the morals of society. It is the propagation of these sentiments I most dread, at this time of general licentiousness. And would to heaven I may be mistaken, in my suspicions that *you*, Sir, have been betrayed into the same error. From some expressions,

expressions, in the latter part of your book, I was not without my fears; though I should be happy to find they were wholly without foundation.

No man, who is not strangely infatuated, will deny that *modern fatalism* is infinitely more prejudicial to the morals of society than the doctrine of a *final restitution*. Our fathers, who were esteemed the standard of ORTHODOXY, would have reprobated the former, though they might not have fallen in with the latter. The *Fatalist* would have fared as ill with them, as the advocate for *Universal Salvation*. It is to be hoped, therefore, those good people, who profess the religious opinions of our fathers, will not discharge all their indignation upon the *Universalist*, while there are other doctrines, as unlike their own, propagated in the world. While they shudder at the consequences of what they improperly style the *new doctrine*, let them tremble at the others. And while they condemn the *Universalist*, let them not pass by the *Fatalist*, unnoticed and unreprieved. Otherwise, they will give just reason to suspect their *Zeal is without knowledge*, and that they are actuated by some other principle, than a real concern for the truth. I mention this, because the *heresy*, of which I have been speaking, is passed over in silence, by those very persons, who profess the same religious opinions with our fathers.

But not to enlarge.—The work, which I have more than once mentioned, will answer all the objections hitherto urged against the *final salvation of all men*. Referring you therefore, to *that*, for further satisfaction, let me take leave with the following serious enquiry.

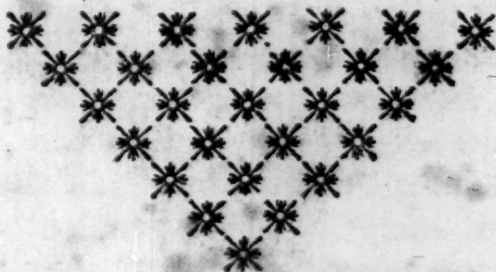
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Do you not really think the *glory of God*, will be more advanced by the *final happiness of the whole human kind*, than the everlasting perdition of any? If, by his wise and benevolent measures, he reduces *all men* to a willing subjection to his authority, and then fixes them in a state of unending felicity, will it not redound more to his honour, than if he left them in utter ruin? Is it not undervaluing the blood of Christ, to suppose he died for any who will perish everlastingly? And can we reconcile the providential administrations of God, but upon the supposition of *final, universal happiness*? If we can not, let us not start at a conclusion, which reflects so much honour upon God, and places such a just value upon the sacrifice of his son. We can not think too highly of the former, nor ought we to set bounds to the happy consequences of the latter.

And as for those serious persons, who express themselves with so much bitterness upon the subject of *Universal Salvation*, let me ask them, whether they imagine its advocates have any worldly ends in view, in publishing their sentiments to mankind? Will it promote their temporal interest? Will it procure them friends? Will it advance their reputation? If it will do neither, they ought, at least, to be treated as *well-meaning enthusiasts*, and not as secret enemies to the good order of society. Such candour, on the side of their opponents, would convince the world, *they* were honest in their objections; that they were really afraid of error, and not of exposing their judgment, by reviewing their early notions, and receding from the principles of their education.

I will only add, if I am in an error, I pray God to convince me of it. I hope, I am open to conviction. My temporal interest, my usefulness, my reputation in the world, would be greatly advanced, by my returning to the common opinions of my fellow-christians. To each of these I do a material injury, while I retain my present religious sentiments. You will therefore, ascribe my plainness to a right principle—even a firm persuasion, in my own mind, that the gospel contains nothing unfit for the world to know; that modern prudence is the false wisdom condemned by our blessed saviour; and that the vulgar arts of concealment are equally unworthy the scholar, the divine, and the Christian!



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